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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 004654

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION - HARIRI
ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION

Summary

1. The Kuwaiti Arabic print media exhibited views from both sides of the spectrum concerning the International Independent Investigation Commission's report and what may subsequently result from its discussion in the United Nations Security Council. Opinions on the subject varied from supporting the findings of the investigation and those involved in preparing it to calling the results of the report untrue and politicized.

Selected Headlines

2. Tuesday, October 25, 2005

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 33: "Blazy calls on Syria to cooperate with Mehlis"; p. 35: "The gray report"; "Ended where he began"
-- Al-Watan p. 47: "December 15th is the last chance: Syria has choice with little room for maneuvering"

3. Wednesday, October 26, 2005

-- Al-Qabas p. 29: "Al-Hariri is not an athlete"
-- Al-Watan front page: "Bush: Diplomacy before the military option. Security Council: cooperation or sanctions"
-- Al-Seyassah front page: "Bush accuses Syrian officials of killing Al-Hariri. Mehlis does not rule out questioning Al-Asad personally"
-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 19: "Syria in the circle of danger. Will it make the painful decisions?"

4. Friday, October 28, 2005

-- Al-Watan p. 25: "Syrian protests do not stop international procedures"

5. Saturday, October 29, 2005

-- Al-Seyassah front page: "Mubarak to Al-Asad: No one trusts the Syrian regime"
-- Al-Seyassah p. 32: "Mehlis and the search for the truth"
-- Al-Qabas front page: "Larson: Al-Asad said to me that Al-Hariri is playing dirty roles against us and Ghazala represents me in Lebanon"
-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 35: "The missing Syrian story, rather stories"

6. Sunday, October 30, 2005

-- Al-Qabas front page: "Al-Asad forms investigation committee to investigate those linked to Al-Hariri's assassination"
-- Al-Watan p. 53: "The Syrian predicament between the Iraqi and Libyan models"
-- Al-Seyassah front page: "Syrian deployment at the Lebanese border to support Palestinian factions"
-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 20: "The Syrian Samurai. and the struggle of the security forces"

Block Quotes

7. Tuesday, October 25, 2005

-- Amna Al-Mosawi wrote for moderate Al-Rai Al-Aam under the title "The gray report": "After months of investigation, the Mehlis report finally looks like a deformed newborn coming out of the womb of politicization at one end and the lack of the needed professionalism at the other. It fell right into the gray zone where it did not prove the guilt of any party, nor did it prove the innocence of any party."

-- Dr. Jasim Al-Fuhaid also wrote for Al-Rai Al-Aam "Ended where he began"; "The conclusions to which the international committee investigating the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri arrived were no

surprise. The German judge did not succeed in presenting a convincing report, one that is supported by strong evidence. The United States is not in a hurry to finalize the Syrian situation so it will let it cook on a slow fire or at least until it is able to free itself from the Iraq and Afghanistan quagmires."

18. Wednesday, October 26, 2005

-- Under the headline "Al-Hariri is not an athlete," Ali Ahmed Al-Baghli wrote for moderate Al-Qabas: "I invite all those for whom the Mehli's report was not to their liking and claimed that it is politicized to read reports by any Arab intelligence gathering agency. They will see the recurrence of phrases such as 'came to my knowledge,' or 'a secret source told me.' Mehli's report did not have any

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such phrases. It presented all the evidence and reasons for the accusation of the security apparatuses of Syria and Lebanon. Al-Hariri was a politician, his assassination was political, and there is no reason why the report on his assassination should not be political."

-- Shaaban Aboud wrote for moderate Al-Rai Al-Aam under the title "Syria in the circle of danger. Will it make the painful decisions?": "Eminent danger lays in Mehli's squarely placing responsibility for the assassination on Syria's and Lebanon's security apparatuses shoulders. The question today is whether or not Syrian diplomats will be able to handle this dangerous detrimental twist. Damascus is at a crossroads, it seems to be the final test. While we must remember that the report did provide for a diplomatic solution through stating that it was not final."

19. Friday, October 28, 2005

-- Abdul Mohsen Al-Hussainy wrote for Al-Watan under the title "Syrian protests do not stop international procedures": "Student and workers' unions in Syria organized protests before even the United Nations Security Council discussed the Mehli's report. Syrian officials, one of whom is the Minister of Information, spoke out with claims that the report is part of a Zionist imperialist conspiracy against Syria. Syria should have learned its lesson by observing what happened to Iraq and how Libya sensed how dangerous the situation was and gave up its weapons of mass destruction."

10. Saturday, October 29, 2005

-- Hamza Al-Shmaikhy wrote for the pro-government daily Al-Seyassah under the title "Mehli's and the search for the truth": "The report presented by the international judge Mehli's contains evidence and information that Arabs with influence in Lebanon are behind the assassination and not others as some people had wanted. The truth will come out no matter how long it takes and the blood of the victims will not be wasted so long as there are honest ones from our region and our world who demand the truth."

-- Shaaban Aboud for moderate Al-Rai Al-Aam wrote under the title "The missing Syrian story, rather stories": "He who reads the Syrian position on the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri and after examining what occurred in Iraq prior to the invasion may see that Damascus is right to claim that Washington is replaying the same scenario again and preparing to invade Syria. Syria has much work ahead of it as the belief of innocence, public demonstration, or the support of some is not enough."

11. Sunday, October 30, 2005

-- Dr. Abdullh Khalifa Al-Shaiji wrote for daily Al-Watan under the headline "The Syrian predicament between the Iraqi and Libyan models": "The decision to assassinate Al-Hariri could not have been taken without the consent of high ranking Syrian security officials. Syria is weak and surrounded quickly losing its strategic weight. This will be the reasons for having it follow the Libyan model but with a much shorter time frame, avoiding the Iraqi scenario because it is not viable for the US. It would widen the conflict zone to span from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan and from Turkey to the Gulf. Syria does not have many options at its disposal."

-- Dr. Mufeed Al-Sawaf wrote for moderate Al-Rai Al-Aam under the headline "The Syrian Samurai and the struggle of the security forces": "General Ghazi Kanaan died, killed himself, or was assassinated. His adversaries described him as the brightest most powerful, most dangerous man in the Middle East. He was responsible for stopping the Lebanese civil war and preventing the division of Lebanon as well as contributing to the establishment of executive, ministerial, and parliamentary institutions in Lebanon. The results of the lying, cheating, and manipulative Mehli's investigation,

with the leak of his analysis, completed the Hollywood-like scene at the United Nations."

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